

Message Text

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21

ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011

DRAFTED BY IO/HDC: JJBUCZACKI:DD

APPROVED BY IO/HDC: RFANDREW

----- 019288

R 030215Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION GENEVA 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 025910

LIMDIS

FOL REPEAT RANGOON 319 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

DEA HQS INFO BANGKOK JAN29

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0319

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JOINT DEA/EMBASSY MESSAGE

BANGKOK FOR DEA

E.GO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BM

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM: DEA VISIT

1. DEA RD ADDARIO AND SWAIN IN COMPANY OF EMBOFFS MET WITH DIRECTOR DEFENSE SERVICES INTELLIGENCE COL AUNG HTAY AND POLICE DIRECTOR-GENERAL U SHWE THAN JANUARY 28 TO DISCUSS CURRENT NARCOTICS SITUATION IN REGION AND PROGRESS OF BURMA NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM. TWO HOUR SESSION WAS CORDIAL AND FRANK AND BURMESE, AS USUAL, WERE WELL PREPARED. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSIONS.

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2. U SHWE THAN OPENED SESSION WITH REVIEW OF CURRENT POLICE EFFORTS IN OPIUM CONTROL. HE STRESSED "NATIONAL COMMITMENT" TO THIS PROGRAM, NOTING THAT GUB CALLING FOR OPIUM ERADICATION CAMPAIGN FROM HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT DOWN TO VILLAGE LEVEL. (INTERESTINGLY, NIB DIRECTOR COL. TIN OO'S PERSONAL INTEREST STRESSED BECAUSE HIS UNCLE WAS AN OPIUM ADDICT.) RECENT CAMPAIGN IN CHIN HILLS (RANGOON 301 - WEEK 4, ITEM 9) CITED AS EXAMPLE; SHWE THEN EXPLAINED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED IN THIS AREA BECAUSE OPIUM A RELATIVELY NEW CROP IN THAT PART OF BURMA WHICH AUTHORITIES WANTED TO STAMP OUT BEFORE IT GAINED SIGNIFICANT Foothold (HE SAID OVER 300 ACRES DESTROYED THERE IN CURRENT CAMPAIGN.) SHWE THAN ALSO NOTED POLICE OPERATIONS ALSO CONTINUING IN EASTERN BURMA IN TAUNGGYI AREA WHERE SOME 1600 ACRES DESTROYED THUS FAR THIS SEASON. TOTAL MAY REACH 2000 ACRES BEFORE CURRENT CROP COMPLETED. (COL AUNG HTAY ADDED THAT BURMA ARMY HAS STANDING ORDER TO DESTROY OPIUM CROPS WHENEVER ENCOUNTERED BUT DID NOT HAVE ON HAND STATISTICS ON THIS ACREAGE TO DATE.)

3. COL. AUNG HTAY THEN REVIEWED RECENT MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKERS AND GAVE MAPS, PHOTOS AND A RESUME OF MAJOR ACTIONS BETWEEN 1973-76 TO DEA REPS. HE AND SHWE THAN STRESSED USEFULNESS OF USG SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS (INCLUDING RECENT KMT ACTION) FOR LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND MEDICAL EVACUATION. BOTH STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT BURMESE ACCUSTOMED TO GETTING BY WITH LITTLE AND DO NOT USE HELICOPTERS UNNECESSARILY.

4. ADDARIO AND SWAIN REVIEWED DEA REGIONAL OPERATIONS AND LEFT PAPER ON SUBJECT WITH BURMESE. BURMESE ASKED ABOUT JANUARY 22 THAI POLICE RAID ON REFINERY NEAR BORDER AND ASKED IF NARCOTICS SEIZED WERE MADE FROM BURMESE OPIUM. DEA REPLIED THAT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE BUT TOOK OCCASION TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF SIGNATURE PROGRAM AND ASKED IF OPIUM AND/OR NARCOTICS SAMPLES FROM BURMESE SEIZURES MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FOR USG ANALYSIS. BURMESE NOTED LEGAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED (CONFISCATED NARCOTICS HAVE TO BE HELD FOR SUBSEQUENT COURT CASES) BUT DID NOT CLOSE DOOR ON POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE. DEA WILL FOLLOW UP WITH LETTER TO BURMESE ON SUBJECT. BURMESE ASKED ABOUT FILMS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCE ON DANGERS OF HEROIN. DEA REPS WILL CHECK.

5. BURMESE ALSO ASKED IF DEA HAD ANY INFORMATION ON SHIPMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NARCOTICS TO ASIAN OR EUROPEAN PORTS ON GUB'S FIVE STAR LINE. DEA REPS SAID THAT THEY HAD NO INDICATION OF THIS POTENTIAL TRAFFICKING ROUTE BUT WOULD REMAIN ALERT AND ADVISE GUB SHOULD ANY SUCH INFORMATION EMERGE. DEA REPS TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF BURMESE ON THAI TRAWLER PROGRAM IN WHICH BURMESE SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST; DEA WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DATA ON SUSPECT TRAWLERS INCLUDING PHOTOS, ETC.

6. BURMESE RAISED QUESTION OF DEA PRESENCE IN RANGOON. COL. AUNG HTAY SAID THAT STATIONING OF DEA REP NOT FEASIBLE, AT LEAST FOR PRESENT, SINCE OTHER GOVERNMENTS MIGHT THEN ATTEMPT TO STATION "AGENTS OF OTHER KINDS" AS WELL. HOWEVER, HE ADDED DEA VISITS ALWAYS WELCOME AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVE COULD TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF RANGOON "AS TOURIST...IN PERMITTED AREAS" SUCH AS TAUNGGYI. SOMEWHAT OBLIQUELY, AUNG HTAY ASSERTED "WE HAVE OUR OWN DEA", REFERRING PRESUMABLY TO GUB SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM. BURMESE ADDED THAT THEY DID NOT PERMIT INTERPOL OR UN NARCOTICS POSITIONS IN BURMA EITHER. RD ADDARIO EXTENDED INVITATION TO BURMESE TO ATTEND FEBRUARY DEA ALUMNI CONFERENCE IN BANGKOK. BURMESE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION BUT POLITELY DECLINED, NOTING THAT THEY ATTEND FEW INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MEETING EXCEPT ANNUAL INTERPOL CONFERENCES. COL. AUNG HTAY SUGGESTED TO ADDARIO THAT DEA REPRESENT BURMESE AT CONFERENCE, ADDING IN SERIOUSNESS THAT US REPS COULD PRESENT TO CONFERENCE INFORMATION SUPPLIED ON RECENT GUB ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS.

7. CONCERNING CURRENT US NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM IN BURMA, BURMESE AGAIN EXPRESSED INTEREST IN MULTISPECTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY (MSP) PROJECT. EMBOFF REITERATED VIEW THAT TECHNICAL EXPERT'S ASSESSMENT OF FEASIBILITY OF MSP MIGHT BE USEFUL; BURMESE AGREED AND AUNG HTAY SAID EXPERT WOULD BE WELCOME. DEA REPS RECOMMEND DON SHELDON OF DEA SCIENCE OFFICE BE CONSIDERED. PER RANGOON 288, APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS.

8. BURMESE ASKED ABOUT FUTURE HELICOPTER DELIVERY AND WERE TOLD OF SCHEDULE PER STATE 20888 AIDAC. THEY WERE PLEASED BUT IING HTAY ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE FOUR HELICOPTERS DELIVERED IN MARCH BEFORE MONSOON RESTRICTS AIR OPERATIONS. THEY WERE TOLD THAT DELIVERIES PROBABLY DETERMINED BY THE BELL PRODUCTION SCHEDULE BUT EMBASSY WOULD INQUIRE. ON HELICOPTER SPARES PACKAGE, SHWE THAN VOLUNTEERED THAT PROAG WOULD BE SIGNED "IN NEXT CONFIDENTIAL

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DAY OR TWO". WILL ADVISE ON RECEIPT. ASKED ABOUT STATUS OF UNFDAC AGREEMENT, WE THAN EXPLAINED DELAY IN FINAL SIGNATURE DUE TO GUB NEED TO LOCATE ADEQUATE COUNTERPART KYAT FUNDS TO SUPPORT PROGRAM. HE COULD OFFER NO ESTIMATE ON WHEN AGREEMENT WOULD BE CONCLUDED.

9. AUNG HTAY ALSO ASKED ABOUT EA NARCOTICS CONFERENCE IN APRIL AND EXPRESSED INTEREST ON BEHALF OF COL. TIN OO IN POSSIBLE VISIT TO RANGOON BY AMBASSADOR VANCE.

10. IN SUM, EMBASSY FEELS DEA VISIT HAS GONE WELL AND ESTABLISHES BASIS FOR DEVELOPING A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH BURMESE. BURMESE HAVE TAKEN VISIT SERIOUSLY AND OBVIOUSLY HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO REAFFIRM THEIR CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS AND THE US PROGRAM. (COL. TIN OO WILL SEE DEA REPS JAN. 29 AND AUNG HTAY HOSTING LUNCH FOR ADDARIO AND SWAIN.) DEA BEL-

IEVE THAT VISIT HAS OPENED DOOR SOMEWHAT FOR DEVELOPING A LIA-
ISON WITH THE GUB AND WILL UNDERTAKE, THROUGH THE EMBASSY, TO STEP
UP THE FLOW OF INFORMATION, MATERIALS, ETC., TO THE BURMESE IN
AN EFFORT TO NURTURE THIS RELATIONSHIP.

11. DEA REPS FEEL BURMESE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN COOPERATION
WITH DEA, ESPECIALLY IN THAILAND (PRIVATELY AUNG HTAY ASSERTED
ONCE MORE HIS DISTRUST OF THAI AUTHORITIES) AND WILL LOOK FOR
OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE OPERATIONAL DATA ON REFINERIES, MOVEMENT
OF TRAFFICERS, ETC. THAT THE BURMESE MAY BE ABLE TO ACT UPON.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE025910
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JJBUCZACKI:DD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760040-0188
From: STATE JOINT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760287/aaaacyfo.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM: DEA VISIT
TAGS: SNAR, BM, US
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006